

Eastern Redcedar

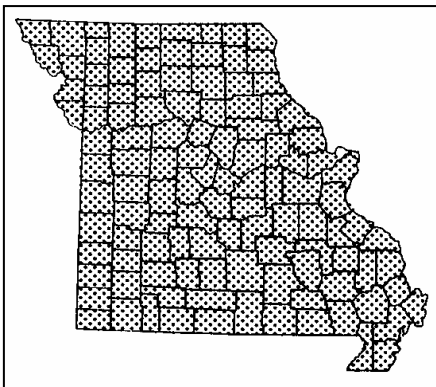
Juniperus virginiana L.

Also called redcedar, cedar and aromatic redcedar, this tree is not a true cedar at all. It is a juniper that grows throughout Missouri, although it is most common in southwestern Ozarks. It is an invader of old fields and often occurs along fence rows where birds have dropped the seeds. It may grow rapidly or slowly, depending upon the site and competition.

The two most distinguishing features of the wood are its odor and its light to dark or pinkish-red heartwood. Only the heartwood contains the delicate and distinctive odor, which comes from a light oil. Slow-growing trees contain a high percentage of red heartwood, whereas old field or other fast-growing trees are mostly sapwood which is a creamy white color. The bark is tan to reddish brown and shreddy. Almost always, the wood is very knotty. It is fairly lightweight, somewhat low in strength and quite brittle, but is a good wood to work. The texture is fine and uniform except where deflected by knots. It shrinks very little and is stable when dry. The growth rings are distinct.

In spite of its usually small size, eastern redcedar is a popular wood. It is used in cedar chests because the fragrance is said to inhibit insects which attack clothing. As shavings, it is popular for pet litter because the odor is said to fend off fleas and mites, and the oil gives the pet's coat a nice shine.

In Missouri, this species is also used for closet linings, novelties of many types, paneling and fence posts. The heartwood is very resistant to decay while the sapwood is not. It is a pleasant wood to work in a home shop and is often available around small sawmills.



Massengale

